

Baltimore General, is of immense reassurance to you and to your people. Proximity is important, we all realize this, but much more than this, it is what you find and who you find ready to serve you when you are brought to a hospital. Heaven only knows how an already full South Baltimore General took care of the more than 100 injured brought to it on a Sunday afternoon in the mid-50's as a result of the terrifying fire that swept through Arundel Park Auditorium. Nor how the hospital managed to take care of many of the victims of the train wreck at Severn, also in the mid-50's, when five persons were killed and 100 were injured. And those of you involved with port activities must surely recall when 127 longshoremen were overcome with deadly chlorine gas that leaked out and covered Locust Point piers two years ago. South Baltimore General Hospital again distinguished itself by caring for 107 of the 127 in this emergency. No one, of course, wants more of these imagination-defying accidents or disasters, but you and I know we must be prepared for them. South Baltimore General has proved itself in the past. We must give these men and women who compose its medical, nursing and administrative staff the facilities to serve us as well in the future.

Your State leaders have sought to create an atmosphere, a climate in which the medical requirements of our people can best be met. Your State government has been particularly concerned with that essential need of the people. I have, for instance, made money available for the building of nursing homes; and I have approved substantially larger annual expenditures to pay for the care of the medically indigent throughout the State. I believe this program for the medically indigent is as advanced as any in the country. Additionally, both by funds and specific program I have sought to advance medical assistance for the aged, for alcoholics, for the mentally disturbed, for retarded, for tubercular patients; and also to improve the facilities for the treatment of chronic diseases and the quality of care in nursing homes. Last year, an initial substantial help was given to Provident Hospital on a basis which is making it possible for that worthwhile reconstruction to be placed underway.

I have this year requested the Legislative Council to consider legislation to give effect to a proposal submitted by the State Planning Commission, by which the voluntary non-profit hospitals of Maryland — such as South Baltimore General — may find it possible to construct the expansion, modernization and relocation of their facilities. The proposal contemplates that long-term, low-cost loans for a substantial proportion of the construction cost will be made available by the State